

Intangible Cultural Heritage Update

News and Notes on Newfoundland and Labrador's Intangible Cultural Heritage Program

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ich@heritagefoundation.ca
Heritage Foundation of NL



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The Grey Sock Project

"Not only at Government House were busy fingers at work; the grey socks were inevitable wherever one went, they were found on table or work basket in every house, both in parlour and kitchen. They were found at bridge tables; dummy knitted while her partner played the hand. They accompanied the worker to committee meetings and social calls. Knitting parties became the fashion, and they have even been seen in the theatre, and now some knit them even on Sundays."

- Tryphena Duley, *A Pair of Grey Socks*, 1916

The ICH Office is currently starting to plan out a new traditional skills project to coincide with the coming centenary of the First World War – the Grey Sock Project. As currently envisioned, the Grey Sock Project has three components:

1. To conduct archival and historical research on the First World War knitting of socks for soldiers at the Front, and the work of the Women's Patriotic Association, and to make that information available to the public through online collections and public presentations.
2. To create opportunities to teach traditional skills in knitting by establishing a regular Grey Sock Knitting League, where experienced knitters can gather to provide guidance to new knitters, and to provide opportunities for sharing of traditional skills and knowledge.
3. To oversee the knitting of socks which will then be collected centrally and distributed to a worthwhile cause, such as a charity dealing with low-income families, homelessness, or new Canadians.

It has been estimated that by the end of 1916, members of the W.P.A. had produced some 62,685 pairs of socks. We might aim for a slightly more modest goal! We are just in the planning stages of the project now, but we've had one productive meeting with our possible partners, the City of St. John's, ANLA, and The Rooms. We'll be looking for people to get involved, particularly experienced knitters. If you want to help out, or have information you think might be useful, contact Dale Jarvis at ich@heritagefoundation.ca or call 1-888-739-1892 ext 2.

All Around the Table: Connecting seniors' food knowledge to the movement for a sustainable food system in NL

By Sarah Ferber

Newfoundland and Labrador faces significant food security challenges. There is not enough food produced here to feed our population. We depend greatly on outside food sources and only have an estimated 2-3 day supply of fresh vegetables in the province. As a result, we face high costs, limited quantity, and low quality of healthy, fresh foods in our stores province-wide. All of this leads to provincially low consumption of fresh vegetables and fruits, and high rates of diabetes, obesity, and other chronic diseases.

This was not always the case. When our grandparents were younger, the grocery store was out the back door: in vegetable gardens, laying hens, fishing boats, and berry grounds. That rich food heritage enabled our province to be more self-sufficient years ago. The Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador (FSN) sees traditional food knowledge, that seniors still hold today, as one of our greatest food security assets.

In order to preserve that knowledge and share it in a beautiful and accessible way, FSN launched a collection of short films called All Around the Table, as part of its Root Cellars Rock initiative (<http://rootcellarsrock.ca/all-around-the-table/>). All Around the Table highlights traditional food skills and knowledge through interviews with 12 seniors from the Avalon Peninsula. Each interviewee shared their memories about where food came from when they were growing up and how it was grown, prepared, preserved, and shared.

As Newfoundland and Labrador is becoming increasingly dependent upon an uncertain global food system, communities are seeking more sustainable and healthy local alternatives. In our search we can look to the traditional ways of growing, preserving, and preparing our food that still make sense today. Kristie Jameson, Executive Director of FSN, notes that “as a collection, these videos shed light on how we can start to work towards building a better food system in the province by looking to our past for inspiration.”

The interviewees talk about everything from baking bread daily in wood stoves, to the importance of keeping a horse to gather kelp for the garden, to the state of our province's food system today. Each interviewee offers their unique perspective about

what it meant to live more self-sufficiently and offers inspiration to younger people to try their hand at some traditional food skills.

Mr. Lewis Cole from Carbonear shared his hope that this information would spread and allow others the same benefits he has felt as a gardener: “I don't think there's anything more gratifying than to go out in your garden and pull up half a dozen carrots for your dinner, or take up a fresh turnip, or take out a few fresh

sugar snap peas for example. You can't buy them in the store as tasty and I'm a little sad to see a lot of our younger people are not moving in that direction because I think once they've started it and had a couple of years at it they would learn as they go along. I think they would find it so gratifying that everybody would be doing it. I wish to God that it would come to pass that everybody would find time to grow just a little; because if you grow a little it would multiply over the years because I don't think there's any other activity that gives you more of a catharsis for the mind and body than growing vegetables.”

All Around the Table touches on many food security opportunities, from the value of supporting local producers and learning to grow our own food, to the importance of eating healthy, home-cooked meals and sharing food as families and communities.



All Around the Table can be viewed online on the Root Cellars Rock blog (<http://rootcellarsrock.ca/all-around-the-table/>). To learn about upcoming public screenings subscribe to the FSN E-News (<http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/enews.html>). To host a free screening where you live, contact Sarah Ferber at info@rootcellarsrock.ca or (709)237-4026.

FSN is a provincial, non-profit organization that was founded in 1998 in response to growing issues of hunger and poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador. FSN's mission is to actively promote comprehensive, community-based solutions to ensure access to adequate and healthy food for all.

Researching Tiddly

By Sarah Ingram

"We played piddley in the spring, the sole equipment needed being two rocks, two sticks and a lot of skill" (from the Book of Newfoundland vol. 6)

Lately the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador has been looking into different types of traditional Newfoundland games that were played across the province. Outdoor games like "Hoist Your Sails and Run", Grounders" or "Red Rover" are just some of the childhood memories we have been talking about in the office.

One very popular traditional game in Newfoundland that was played outside is Tiddly. This game had a range of different names, and was also known as "Tidley", Tidley Stick", "Pidley", Pidley Stick", "Pippy", "Puss and Duck", "Puss", "Flick" or "Scat". A regional variation of the name, Snig, was also found along the Southern Shore in Cape Broyle. The equipment is simple: all you need is two sticks, one shorter than the other, and two rocks of about the same size.

The rules can vary slightly from place to place, but the basic rules are as follows. The short stick, sometimes called the puss stick, is laid across the rocks spaced about 10 inches apart. Whoever is "up to bat" first hooks the short stick with the long one. The intention is to hit the short stick as far as you can; points are awarded based on the distance you hit the short stick. However, if a member of the other team catches the short stick, the batter is out. After three outs, the teams switch sides.

There are many variations on this set of rules. Some versions state that after you are up to bat you place your long stick across the rocks. If the other team can knock that off with the short stick, the batter would be out as well. The number of outs, or points, needed to win also varied from story to story. Generally, this game seems to be traditionally played by boys, and fell out of popularity sometime around the mid 1960s.



Since 2008, Carbonear has been hosting a World Cup of Tiddly. Last year they had 14 teams competing, including both a men's and a women's competition. They resurrected the game as an addition to Carbonear Days weekend, and it has been a successful event ever since. A special thanks to Margaret Ayad for supplying photos from the 2012 Carbonear World Cup of Tiddly for this article.

If you have any memories, photos or other names for Tiddly, or any other traditional games, we would love to hear about it! You can call me at 739-1892 ext. 5, or email me at sarah@heritagefoundation.ca



Children's Work and Play with Jack and Enid Barrett of Bishop's Cove

By Nicole Penney

The following is an excerpt from an interview conducted by Linda Cooper as part of a series of oral histories collected by the Baccalieu Trail Heritage Corporation in 2005. This portion of the interview explores not only children's games and play but also the responsibilities that were expected of them, such as tending to animals and making hay.

Linda Cooper: What kind of games would you play as children?

Jack Barrett: Well, we had a lot of fun, you know. The girls used to play hopscotch in the summertime and you used to have a piece of string and transfer it from one person's fingers to another.

Enid Barrett: And they'd (points to Jack) be playing pitchin' buttons.

JB: and the girls would be playing marbles. You'd toss them up and turn over your hand and catch them on the back. That was a nice game. And girls had dolls.

EB: We played a lot of copies we called it, copy houses. I had one down to the store, down to our shed, [wall]paper on it and everything, just the same as if I was living there. And we'd have our dolls.

JB: Now the boys used to sail boats in the little brooks here and there and make boats for themselves. They'd pitch buttons, bazz buttons and they used to spin tops. We would make tops and spin them. Quite a few things.

LC: Sounds like you had a lot of fun

JB: Oh gracious yes...

EB: Oh yes, we had lovely fun.

JB: You didn't have all day long, you know. You couldn't get bored. A lot of kids are saying now, "I'm bored, there's nothing to do, I'm bored!" There were so many chores in those days. Water had to be brought in...

EB: Yes, you had to lug the water in two buckets...

JB: The kindling had to be bagged and brought in, wood had to be cut up and brought in, the boys were responsible for the animals when the fathers were in the woods. And then when it came to be this time of year, when you'd start plowing the ground, the boys had to lead the horse to plow the ground and had to spread the manure over the ground. You know, we had to pitch in and help out. You had to help out with whatever was going on. And then when it came time to plant the vegetables, that was a job too.

EB: And putting capelin over the potatoes, right out of the bucket.

JB: Yes, and then when the capelin came you had to get them and spread them all over the potatoes and turnips.

EB: And no rubber gloves on your hands when you threw it (scrunches face in disgust)

JB: When the weeds grew, that was a back-breaking thing.

EB: You had to weed all the potatoes and turnip.

JB: And when the time came to cut the hay, you had to cut the hay when you got big enough. You had to help cure it, you had to go spread it, go make it off, and you had to pook it up in the evening. Then you had to spread it the next day, for two or three days, and then it had to be all raked off the ground and brought in and stowed back on the barn loft.

EB: And someone had to stow it and someone else had to get up and jump on it and you'd be itching all over.



The Games We Played

By Lisa Wilson

Children, when left to their own devices, away from the watchful eye of their parents, engage in games, play, and acts of mischief that for some, are what make childhood a special time. As the outpost experience changes in Newfoundland and Labrador, many of those who grew up here have fond recollections of their simple, albeit busy childhoods. Not just the children, but their parents too, remember when cars were less of a threat, the most distracting technology available was the telephone, and undeveloped spaces beckoned children for games of Rounders.

"... We had plenty of room and the kids, you didn't have to worry about anybody interfering with anybody else. There would be times for instance that you could come into this house and there would be about 15 youngsters here, our kids, their friends. ... Very little traffic came up here in those days, except the people who lived on it. It was a wonderful place for sliding and all the kids in Bay Roberts would congregate here. Oh yes, it was wonderful!"

-Lorne Kirby, resident of Cable Avenue, Bay Roberts

Gangs of children congregating on the streets, sliding where cars would normally be, helped children cope with the difficulties of wintertime. They could get outside, expend some energy, and bond with their peers. And it is just one of the many kinds of play that I have collected during oral history interviews. Children also enjoyed games of Tiddly, Hoist Your Sails and Run, Spotlight, and activities like marbles and flying kites. What a wonderful time indeed, so why not bring back some of this play? But wait...does anyone remember the rules to these long lost games?

On Thursday, February 27, I will be presenting on the topic of childhood games and mischief in Newfoundland's past as part of the Coffee and Culture lecture series at The Rooms Provincial Museum and Archives. Please join me for this slideshow and discussion, and if you can remember what games you used to play, please be sure to share your memories.

THE GAMES WE PLAYED

February 27, 2014, 2:30 pm

The Rooms Provincial Museum and Archives



Photos: (left) The Williams children in front of their family home on Cable Avenue, Bay Roberts, undated photo; (right) Kirby children sliding in the early 80s on Cable Avenue, courtesy of L. Kirby.

Preliminary research notes on the traditional Newfoundland children's game "Hoist Your Sails and Run"

By Dale Jarvis

On 22 June 1925, in the "Here and There" section, the St. John's newspaper The Evening Telegram ran the following notice:

Pastimes of the Past –

Scout Out, Hoist your Sails and Run, Bar Off, Farmer in the Dell, etc., will be revived at C.L.A. Outing, Smithville, Wednesday.

To place this in some context, archivist Bert Riggs notes that "to the best of my knowledge, the CLA was the [Knights of] Columbus Ladies Association," while Smithville was what historian Paul O'Neill refers to as a "suburban sports centre." He notes that the facility was,

...a catering establishment on Long Pond Road with a large dining room and ballroom. A verandah ran the length of the building. It stood at the south end of what became the Pius X parish rectory and was much frequented, not only for weddings, afternoon teas and a variety of receptions, but by tennis players in summer and by skaters and ski enthusiasts in winter (O'Neill 262).

The Smithville outing organized by the Ladies Association featured several children's games. Of these, "Farmer in the Dell" with its associated song is probably best remembered today, even if people largely remember the melody and lyrics, rather than the mechanics of the game itself. The other games mentioned are less well-known, though one, "Hoist Your Sails and Run" crops up from time to time in oral histories and memoirs of childhood pastimes in eastern Newfoundland.

Stanley Carew, who shared his memories of growing up on Bell Island in J.R. Smallwood's Book of Newfoundland in 1975, included the game in a list of pastimes he remembered. He noted that "football, hoist your sails and run, throw the bar, rounders, hide and seek, were all games which seemed especially attractive as the evenings of spring lengthened" (Carew 229). In his address to Memorial University's Spring Convocation in 1994, Dr. John Douglas Eaton likewise mentioned the game. He reminisced,

When I was a young boy living on Cookstown Road here in St. John's, I was like Sam Walters, who wrote in his biography, 'I participated in many sports and excelled in others.' By the age of 12 I had become very proficient in the popular children's games of the day: rounders, tin can cricket, cats, hoist your sails and run, conkers, tin tacks, piddley tips, hop scotch and street hockey (Eaton 15).

On 5 September 2013, I interviewed Janet Story at her home on South Side Road. Janet Story was born at the Grace Hospital in St. John's in 1924, the daughter of George and Dorothy Story, and she remembered playing "Hoist Your Sails and Run" in the 1930s:

The details are vague, but I know there were teams. The leader of one team was sent out, and one team would hide. The other team would try to locate, and... after having been discovered, by the opposing team would shout, 'hoist your sails and run' and according to Robin McGrath, you opened your coat and flew like a kite. I don't remember doing that, but probably we did. A lot of this stuff happened around this house, you could squeeze in between the root cellar and the barn and get half a dozen people squat in there out of the way. In those days there was very little traffic so that, you know, you had the free run of the railway which ran across in front of the door. So you could always hide down there amongst the railway cars. We didn't have any fear about getting killed. There wasn't anything to worry about, except someone throwing a stone at you. There were families of children about the same age from Blackhead Road, down the street. There were always kids around.

In February of 2000, students of Laval High School, Placentia, curated a historical and cultural website, sharing stories from their community. On a page called "Games of Olden Days" they included this description of Hoist your Sails and Run:

Teams of ten or twelve boys would play a game called "Hoist your Sails and Run." All the boys of one team would go hide while the other team wasn't allowed to look. When they were all in hiding the other team would go look for them. If someone neared the spot

where a member of the team was hiding, the team member who was approached would yell "Hoist your Sails and Run". This was warning to the other boys, that if they stayed in their places now they would be caught. This game continued until all boys were caught and then the teams changed sides.

Interestingly, two folklore Masters theses on rural play traditions in Newfoundland make no mention of the game. Keith Coles (72-74), writing in 1998 on the evolution of children's game traditions in Savage Cove, Northern Peninsula from 1900 to 1992, includes references to other hiding and finding games, such as Hide-N-Go-Seek and Hide-N-Blind. Delf Hohmann (116-127), writing in 1993 on play and games in Southern Harbour, Placentia Bay includes seeking games such as Hide and Seek and Spotlight. While similar in some regards, none of those four games are exactly synonymous with Hoist Your Sails and Run.

If you have memories of "Hoist Your Sails And Run" please contact Dale Jarvis at ich@heritagefoundation.ca.

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Photo: Children playing "Pitch and Toss" – Provincial Archives photo A-7-12.

